

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
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2003

7 January 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Western Hemisphere Division

SUBJECT : Selection of Site for Propaganda Broadcast

1. An exhaustive study has been made to determine the best possible site for the propaganda broadcast. Technical feasibility and other related factors involved in the selection of the site were carefully considered.

2. In the selection of a site, there is a very definite technical limitation. Standard wave broadcasts are not possible due to the fact that these broadcast transmitters cover only a 10-25 mile broadcast radius, except for a few odd hours during the day. To make broadcasts that can be heard in the target area, any time during the hours of 0800 and 2400, it is necessary to broadcast in the 6 MC broadcast band during the daylight hours with a shift to 3 MC during the late broadcast hours. As spring approaches, it will be possible to broadcast continually in the 6 MC band during the desired hours.

3. To make broadcasts as indicated in the above paragraph, it is absolutely necessary to be located 300 to 350 miles from the desired target area. Technically, we are limited as to a selection of the site to Nicaragua, the eastern tip of Honduras, Yucatan, and the ocean areas that are covered by the circumference of a circle drawn on the target city and having a radius of 300-350 miles.

4. Santa Fe, which was originally planned as the broadcast site, does not meet the exact distance requirement. In addition, it was found that there are fifteen technicians stationed on Santa Fe, numerous regional and headquarters weather bureaus, and CAA personnel who would be aware of the program if it were based on Santa Fe. In addition, it would be possible for a plane to fly from the target area to Santa Fe making direction finding, fixes, and pin-pointing the broadcast as originating from Santa Fe. Because Santa Fe is U. S. Government owned, and there are only U. S. Government employees on the island, the broadcast is proven as U. S. Government sponsored.

5. Another possible broadcast site would be on a CIA sponsored ship which would cruise in the official areas within the distance required for the broadcast. The procurement either by purchase or loan through the U. S. Navy, the logistical problems involved, and the fact that it would require two equipped ships to keep one on the station for the required 2-6 months operational period, rule out this choice. The cost and time factors involved are both undesirable, as were all security aspects. For

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example, the security clearing of crews, etc.

6. Consideration of island bases other than Santa Fe was limited due to inadequate information. The practical problems of shipping approximately seven tons of broadcast equipment, logistics, supporting islands without attracting undue attention, makes the choice of an island impossible within the time limitations imposed by the operation. Given the necessary months to make reconnaissance and planning the use of an island would be possible.

7. The possibility of basing the broadcast unit in Nicaragua was given much study. This broadcast site is both technically feasible and politically tenable. The president of Nicaragua has agreed to the basing of this unit in Nicaragua and is willing to provide an isolated finca where the installation will be made. He will also provide guards and logistical support for the installation.

8. The danger of Somoza's sponsorship is realized. However, it must also be realized that any site that is selected for the broadcast unit can be located if a determined effort is made by the opposition. Therefore, the broadcast cannot be made from a U. S. area. This means that the broadcast must be located in a non-U. S. Government area and must have the sponsorship of the local government.

9. Somoza's sponsorship thus becomes a necessity and is no worse and is, in many ways, better than the sponsorship of any other Central American president. Somoza is the strongest anti-Communist leader in this area. Because of Nicaragua's cooperation with the U. S. Government, which has been strengthened by the recently concluded military mission and military aid agreement, it is believed that Somoza's sponsorship will be firm and that he will meet his commitments.

10. Because of Somoza's sponsorship, no Nicaraguan military or police forces will be utilized in a search to pin-point the broadcast site. A determined search could only be carried out by Guatemalan sympathizers, local Communists, or by Somoza's opposition. While it must be considered possible to pin-point and to capture the broadcast unit, it is not believed that this armed assault against Somoza's military guard would be carried out. Without actually capturing equipment and simple program material, it would be extremely difficult to document a case against the broadcast unit.

11. The actual broadcast will be beamed by specially constructed antennas so that radiation will be maximum near the target area. It is believed that the broadcast will not be heard within Nicaragua except within a small area surrounding the broadcast unit.

12. General security of a Nicaraguan site is believed better than either the proposed Santa Fe or shipboard installation. There will be fewer

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individuals who will be involved in the operation than would be the case in either of the above two. The security drawbacks involved in the logistical support of the boat and the island installation are greater than those in the support of the Nicaraguan site.

13. After consideration of all the above factors, and considering the time limitations imposed by the operation, it is believed that Nicaragua offers the best possible site for the broadcast unit. It is recommended that the selection of this site be approved.

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WHD/CHV/ss

15 Jan. 54

Disapproved, because of objection by
Somozas.

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